

Art Unit 2653
Serial No. 10/633,145

PATENT
Attorney Docket No.: K35A1301

REMARKS

Applicant agrees with the examiner that the phrase "... being an integer in a range between 2 to 3" is an indefinite phrase. The indefiniteness was not intentional, and applicant has hereby amended independent claims 1 and 5 to eliminate and replace the phrase with definite claim language.

Applicant respectfully submits that the following remarks specifically point out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the prior art of record, including US Patent Application Publication 2002/0163763 to Budde (hereinafter "Budde App").

Firstly, the Budde App does not disclose a "trace suspension flex" as required by all of the presently pending claims. Paragraph [0029] of the Budde App mentions only "a flex circuit." The Budde App fails to specify whether "a flex circuit" refers to an individual trace suspension flex that is a sub-component of a single head gimbal assembly (HGA), or else refers to the main flex cable that electrically connects all of the HGAs in the head stack assembly (HSA) to the disk drive's printed circuit board assembly (PCBA). The main flex cable and the trace suspension flex are separate and distinct components as understood by those of ordinary skill in the art, and single contemporary disk drives include both of those components (they are not substitutes for each other).

Secondly, the Budde App utterly fails to disclose a trace suspension flex that has a "metal base layer and a plurality of conductors supported by the metal base layer," as required by all of the presently pending claims. Even if additional meaning were lent to the language "a flex circuit" in Paragraph [0029] of the Budde App, such that the phrase were construed to connote "trace suspension flex," the Budde App still does not teach that "a flex circuit" has a "metal base layer and a plurality of conductors supported by the metal base layer." Such a teaching is simply absent in the Budde App. For this reason alone, the Budde App can not anticipate any of the pending claims.

Thirdly, the protrusions 208, 210, 212 in the Budde App are clearly not a part of an "actuator arm," as required by all of the presently pending claims. Rather the

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protrusions 208, 210, 212 in the Budde App protrude from a "base plate area" 202 of a "suspension" 200 (see e.g. paragraph [0028] of the Budde App). The Budde App considers the suspension 200 (including base plate area 202) to be separate and distinct from the actuator arms (called "track accessing arms") 114. See, e.g., paragraph [0027] of the Budde App. Likewise, the pending claims also separately recite the head gimbal assembly (HGA) and the actuator arm as different structures; one is not a part of the other. Accordingly, protrusions 208, 210, 212 in the Budde App can not be properly considered as part of an "actuator arm" in the context of the pending claims, and therefore can not anticipate the presently pending claims under §102(e).

Fourthly, the presently pending claims specifically require that the HGA include a base plate component. Although the base plate area 202 of the Budde App may satisfy the pending claim requirement of a "base plate," that can only be true if the base plate area 202 is properly considered to be part of an HGA. In that case, however, the protrusions 208, 210, 212 must be properly understood to extend from a sub-component of an HGA, not from any separately-claimed and distinct "actuator arm." Certainly both the pending claims and the Budde App rule out the possibility that the base plate be considered as part of the "actuator arm" (which is recited separately from the suspension or HGA in both applications). However, if the base plate area 202 in the Budde App is improperly construed to be part of the actuator arm 114 (rather than being properly construed as part of the HGA that includes suspension 112 and slider 110), then consistency would require Budde to also be understood to lack the teaching of an HGA that includes a base plate (as required by all of the pending claims).

Fifthly, the Budde App does not teach that actuator arms 114 are stamped. Rather, applicant understands paragraph [0048] of the Budde App to teach only that suspensions 112 may be stamped.

Sixthly, applicant also respectfully traverses the examiner's position that "slider" 110 in the Budde App is equivalent to the instantly claimed "head gimbal assembly." Rather the slider 110 of the Budde App can only be properly understood to be a mere sub-component of an HGA (as base plate area 202 must also be understood).

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In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims 1-9 are now in condition for allowance and requests reconsideration of the rejections. Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayments to Deposit Account No. 23-1209.

Respectfully submitted,

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